



Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chief Justice, Presidents of American Bar Association, State Bar, Discuss Impacts of Budget Cuts

Chief Justice, Attorneys Pledge to Continue Pushing to Restore Adequate Funding to Judicial Branch

SAN FRANCISCO—Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye held a summit today with leaders from the American Bar Association, the State Bar of California and the Open Courts Coalition to discuss the impact of the ongoing fiscal crisis in the courts.

Years of budget cuts prompted by the recession have resulted in court closures, layoffs and other cost-cutting measures in California and across the country. As the Judicial Council prepared to deal with the latest \$544 million budget cut for 2012–2013, Cantil-Sakauye met with the bar leaders in her chambers in San Francisco.

“California is not the only state facing this crisis of court underfunding, but cuts over the last four years certainly make this state the hardest hit,” said Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III, ABA President. “Forty-two states cut budgets for their judiciaries last year, and this year is equally challenging around the country. Courts should be open, accessible and reliable to ensure our rights are protected and to preserve the one safe place our citizens and our businesses have to resolve disputes. The ABA urges all Californians, including state legislators, to support our courts and understand they are not just another line item in a budget—their function goes to the very core of our daily lives and the heart of our unique constitutional democracy.”

The ABA has established a Task Force on Preservation of the Justice System to mobilize the legal profession, legislators and the broader public through an advocacy campaign about the ongoing underfunding crisis. Prominent lawyers David Boies and Theodore B. Olson, co-chairs of the task force, provided a national perspective on the problem when they testified in April at a legislative hearing in Sacramento.

In California, a bipartisan committee of attorneys has formed the Open Courts Coalition to advocate for restoration of court funding. Co-chairs are Los Angeles attorney Paul R. Kiesel and Burlingame attorney Niall McCarthy.

State Bar President Jon Streeter, a member of the Open Courts Coalition's 17-member steering committee, said:

"As we continue the battle for adequate funding of the courts in our state, we must not lose sight of the fact that this is a national problem. The rule of law is the cornerstone of our democracy, and without an independent judiciary to enforce it, our freedom is at stake, locally and nationally."

Cantil-Sakauye said of Friday's meeting:

"As California's judicial branch struggles with a financial crisis affecting our state and country, it is gratifying to know that we have the enthusiastic support of the American Bar Association, the California State Bar and the Open Courts Coalition. It is only through our unified efforts that we can hope to restore adequate funding to the judicial branch in California and in other states, so that equal access to justice may be preserved for all."

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.